

Contents of this application packet:

- ❑ A copy of the Montana Department of Agriculture, Organic Certification Program's **Policy Manual**.

Instructions: Read, review and retain

Explanation: The Policy Manual contains all the information that you need to understand in order to apply for and become a certified organic producer and/or handler. The Policy Manual includes descriptions of the certification and inspection processes, an explanation of your rights and responsibilities as a certified operator, a copy of the Department's Administrative Rules, the National Organic Program (NOP) standards for organic production and handling, a summary of the requirements for additional certification to the European organic regulation, a summary of the Bio-Suisse standards (must be verified at inspection for export to Switzerland), and a description of terms of the USDA-MAFF export arrangement (for exports to Japan).

- ❑ A copy of the **Montana State Statute** authorizing the Organic Certification Program (80-11-601 and 602, MCA).

Instructions: Read, review and retain

Explanation: This is the Montana state law authorizing the Organic Certification Program.

- ❑ An Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) packet, including the **OMRI generic and brand name materials lists**.

Instructions: Use as reference tools to check the status of any materials you wish to use in your organic handling operation.

Explanation: OMRI is an independent organization that reviews materials used as inputs, processing aids or ingredients in organic production and handling. The reference lists indicate the status of materials (as approved, prohibited or restricted) under the NOP standards. These lists may be used as a guide when choosing materials for use in your handling operation.

- ❑ **An Organic Handler fee schedule**.

Instructions: Read, review and retain

Explanation: Lists fees charged for handler certification.

❑ **An Organic Handler Application form.**

Instructions: Complete and return this form if applying for handler certification. Follow instructions on the form.

Explanation: The NOP defines handler as: “To sell, process, or package agricultural products, except such term shall not include the sale, transportation, or delivery of crops or livestock by the producer thereof to a handler.” If your operation(s) fit this definition, please complete a handler application.

❑ **An Organic Handling System Plan form.**

Instructions: Complete and return this form if you are submitting a handler application. **Complete all sections of the form, mark the section as “Not Applicable” if it does not apply to your operation. Do NOT leave any sections blank.** Follow instructions on the form.

Explanation: An Organic System Plan is: “A plan of management of an organic production or handling operation that has been agreed to by the producer or handler and the certifying agent and that includes written plans concerning all aspects of agricultural production or handling.” This plan is the description of your operation, which will be used to determine your eligibility for certification and compliance with organic standards. Failure to complete [any part of] the form will delay processing your application.

❑ **A Product Profile form.**

Instructions: Complete and return a Product Profile form for each organic product handled or planned to be handled if you are applying for certification as an organic handler. Follow instructions on the form.

Explanation: The Product Profile provides detailed information on your organic products. This information is required to determine eligibility for certification and compliance with organic standards.

❑ **A Record of Complaints to an Organic Operation form.**

Instructions: If you wish to be certified under international standards, which may facilitate acceptance of your organic products in foreign markets, you must record all complaints received (both written and verbal complaints) pertaining to the organic integrity of your products. Retain this record for a minimum of 5 years from the date of the record's creation. DO NOT return this form with your application—the information you record on this form will be reviewed during your annual inspection.

Explanation: In order for a handler to ship organic products to European and other export markets, the certifier of that operation must be accredited under the internationally accepted regulation of ISO Guide 65. This regulation requires operators to record complaints made to them regarding their compliance with organic standards. The Montana Department of Agriculture supplies this form to assist operators in establishing a system for recording complaints that is compliant with ISO Guide 65. The inspector will verify your record of complaints during your annual inspection.